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Review of Crucible of Europe: 9th and 10th Centuries in European History, by G. Barraclough

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they would have failed. No such ephemeral conditions could explain the end of the papacy as institution or as ideology, according to Ullmann; but finally it "suffered from the incubus of its own tradition . . . the continued rigidity, 'authoritarianism' and monarchic structure of Church government" (p. 330).

These Cambridge lectures are the end of a series of eight books which set forth an appealing view of one important institution. The selective use of evidence and the overall structure of Ullmann's ideas have been assessed with care by Ernst Kantorowicz and by Gaines Post in *Speculum* (1964, 1968) and by Francis Oakley in *Past and Present* (August 1973). An excellent discussion of the early evidence is by Karl F. Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church, 300-1140*, published in 1969. In his forty pages of bibliographical notes (revised to 1974) Ullmann failed to cite the well-known works of these and other scholars who weigh the same evidence but do not share the same viewpoint or reach the same conclusions.

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Traditions of Medieval English Drama. By STANLEY J. KAHRL. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975. 162 pp. $5.95.

In the present decade there has been a remarkable spurt of productivity by students of medieval English drama. Among a number of recent volumes, Stanley J. Kahrl's modest work of synthesis can be cited as the most useful introduction for the student and non-specialist and as a remarkably stimulating review of the major critical problems in the field of early drama for the scholar. Kahrl is specially interested in the traditions of production for this dramatic literature; but he never glosses over its literary qualities and offers, in addition to observations on staging, a number of sensitive (and sometimes quite original) readings. Perhaps the most important chapter is that which deals with "character and verisimilitude." Abandoning the term "realism" which has raised difficulties because of its connotations in modern literary criticism, and straddling the problems posed by the startling humor of these plays and their reliance on literary commonplaces, Kahrl argues forcefully that the aesthetic test of verisimilitude is whether, "no matter how shocking, [it] serves a purpose" (p. 89). Kahrl goes behind the surface allegory of the moral plays to expose their liveliness as dramatic invention. Always mindful that the traditions of "medieval" drama lived well into the reign of Elizabeth I (when the plays were suppressed as a matter of policy), he concludes with a discussion of the problem of the continuity of medieval with Tudor drama: "to the Elizabethans, as to the medieval audience, all history is instructive, either in a figural sense, where one event announces the nature of one to follow, or in an exemplary sense, as a cautionary tale" (p. 134). The volume is a companion to Richard J. Axton's *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages*, published by the same press, which is particularly concerned with the secular traditions which religious drama assimilated. Both are invaluable sources for church historians who have an interest in "popular" religious teaching throughout the Middle Ages and during the English Reformation.

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The Crucible of Europe: The Ninth and Tenth Centuries in European History. By GEOFFREY BARRACLOUGH. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976. 180 pp. $14.95.

The title of this book is misleading since the work deals primarily with the Carolingian Empire and marginally with other European states. Barraclough does not really provide a narrative but prefers interpretation, or rather reinterpretation. He approaches church history via the church-state question and makes some of his most pertinent observations in this area. Following a growing tendency among

medievalists, he gives more credence to the medieval sources than to twentieth-century outlooks. Charlemagne's biographers claimed he knew nothing of the pope's plan to crown him emperor in 800. Many modern scholars have routinely assumed this to be a ruse, a ninth-century Watergate designed to make a cunning, ambitious emperor appear the humble, obedient Christian accepting the papal will. But Barraclough argues that the pope, Leo III, rejected the legitimacy of the Byzantine empress Irene and preferred Charles to her. The papacy did not create or revive a Western empire but simply chose its Frankish protector for the existing *imperium*. Far from feeling he owed his "empire" to the pope, Charles deliberately minimized clerical participation in state affairs and negotiated a legitimate imperial title from Irene's successor Nicephorus to replace the *ad hoc* papal one.

Barraclough further demonstrates that the exclusive papal privilege of crowning the emperor was a product of the Frankish civil wars when the contending factions looked to the pope as arbiter. The theory of the empire as instrument of the church soon followed the fact. The decline of the papacy in the tenth century weakened its authority with the empire but the theory survived until the Reformation. The chapters on the tenth century deal peripherally with church history; this reader would have preferred a longer treatment on bishops and cities in Italy. A chapter on Anglo-Saxon England mentions Dunstan of Canterbury's role in allying church and state and in establishing Canterbury's right to crown the king.

Readers of this journal will be disappointed by the book's neglect of the theological issues of the ninth century, such as the predestination, eucharistic and Filioque controversies, as well as of spirituality and exegesis. Even Cluny receives only a few pages. But within the framework he set for himself, Barraclough has written a fine and occasionally provocative book.

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The English Church under Henry I. By M. BRETT. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975. xii + 282 pp. $19.50.

The title of this book suggests two questions: what value has an investigation of the English church, in isolation, at any point in the Middle Ages: and what is the validity of singling out any particular king's reign as a meaningful unit? To both questions Martin Brett suggests satisfactory answers, specifically in his first chapter, "The English Church as a Unit of Study." To single out the English church is not necessarily to insist that it was distinct from the medieval church as a whole through, say, its independence from papal authority or from canon law; and as a pupil of Sir Richard Southern, Brett knows the special place the first third of the twelfth century played in the evolution of medieval England.

Out of a very thorough combing of a wide range of sources (among which, it is good to see, liturgical sources are not ignored) Brett has organized his material into chapters on the exercise of papal jurisdiction in England, the archbishops, the bishop as pastor and as magistrate and administrator, cathedral clergy and bishops' officers, and the parish clergy. All are interesting and sometimes provocative, though the last seems to be truncated; it is, however, redeemed by an exceptionally sensitive conclusion: "It is in a sense absurd to study the scaffolding of the church when one knows so little of the needs it existed to satisfy: the pastoral and sacramental mission of the church escapes, while its outward forms survive."

Unfortunately it must be remarked that the volume is badly proof-read, at least twenty small errors having been noted by the reviewer. But, these excluded, this is an excellent monograph, one which really advances the field it studies.

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